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ABSTRACT

The importance of a shared memory appears to have lost its foothold in higher education. As the nation moves forward into the 21st century, future leaders are graduating with an alarming ignorance of their heritage--a kind of collective amnesia--and a profound historical illiteracy that bodes ill for the future of the republic. The American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA) commissioned the Roper Center to survey college seniors from the nation's best colleges and universities (according to "U.S. News and World Report's" annual rankings). Questions were drawn from a basic high school curriculum. Four out of five or 81% of seniors from the top colleges/universities received a grade of D or F. To find out what the nation's top colleges/universities demand of students in U.S. history, ACTA conducted a study of graduation requirements at the same 55 colleges/universities already surveyed. Results showed that students can graduate from 100% of the top schools without taking a single course in U.S. history. What happens in higher education relates directly to what happens in K-12. Immediate steps must be taken to ensure that the memory of the nation and its remarkable past is passed on to the next generation. Actions to improve the current situation can be taken by colleges and universities, students and their families, alumni and donors, state and federal governments, and accrediting agencies. Survey data, containing 4 tables and 34 questions, as well as the list of colleges and universities, are appended. (BT)

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ED 441 736

LOSING AMERICA'S MEMORY

Historical Illiteracy in the 21st Century

"Anyone who doubts that we are raising a generation of young Americans who are historically illiterate needs only to read this truly alarming report." –

– David McCullough

SO 031 784

Anne D Neal

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A Report by the American Council of Trustees and Alumni
Anne D. Neal
Jerry L. Martin

Presidents' Day, February 2000

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The American Council of Trustees and Alumni is a non-profit organization based in Washington, D.C. dedicated to academic freedom, quality and accountability. For further information about ACTA and its programs, please contact:

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February 16, 2000

LOSING AMERICA'S MEMORY
Historical Illiteracy in the 21st Century

Issued for Presidents' Day, February 21, 2000

"If a nation expects to be ignorant and free,
it expects what never was and never will be." -- Thomas Jefferson

"[W]e *cannot escape history*." – Abraham Lincoln

Introduction

Who are we? What is our past? Upon what principles was American democracy founded? And how can we sustain them? -- These are the questions that have inspired, motivated, perplexed since the beginning. And they are questions which still elude our full understanding. Yet they underscore a belief that a shared understanding, a shared knowledge, of the nation's past unifies a people and ensures a common civic identity. Indeed, the American system is uniquely premised on the need for an educated citizenry. Embarking on the experiment of a democratic republic, the Founders viewed public education as central to the ability to sustain a participatory form of government. "If a nation expects to be ignorant and free," Thomas Jefferson said, "it expects what never was and never will be."

But the importance of a shared memory appears to have lost its foothold in American higher education. As we move forward into the 21st century, our future leaders are graduating with an alarming ignorance of their heritage -- a kind of collective amnesia -- and a profound historical illiteracy which bodes ill for the future of the republic.

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There is a widespread, though unspoken, assumption that, if not all citizens, at least college graduates -- certainly those from the elite institutions -- have a basic understanding of this country's history and founding principles. Colleges themselves rarely, if ever, test this assumption. The American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA) decided to do so. What do seniors at the nation's best colleges and universities know and not know about the history of this nation? What grade would they receive if tested?

ACTA commissioned the Roper organization -- The Center for Survey Research and Analysis at the University of Connecticut -- to survey college seniors from the nation's best colleges and universities as identified by the *U.S. News & World Report*'s annual college rankings. The top 55 liberal arts colleges and research universities were sampled during December 1999. (For a list, *see* Appendix A.)

The questions were drawn from a basic high school curriculum. In fact, many of the questions had been used in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) tests given to high school students.

How did seniors from our nation's top colleges and universities do? They flunked. Four out of five -- 81% -- of seniors from the top 55 colleges and universities in the United States received a grade of D or F. They could not identify Valley Forge, or words from the Gettysburg Address, or even the basic principles of the U.S. Constitution.

- Scarcely more than half knew general information about American democracy and the Constitution.
- Only 34% of the students surveyed could identify George Washington as an American general at the battle of Yorktown, the culminating battle of the American Revolution.
- Only 42% were able to identify George Washington as "First in war, first in peace, first in the hearts of his countrymen."
- Less than one quarter (23%) correctly identified James Madison as the "father of the Constitution."
- Even fewer -- 22% of the college seniors -- were able to identify "Government of the people, by the people, and for the people" as a line from the Gettysburg Address -- arguably one of the three most important documents underlying the American system of government.
- Over one-third were unable to identify the U.S. Constitution as establishing the division of power in American government.
- Little more than half (52%) knew George Washington's Farewell Address warned against permanent alliances with foreign governments.

What do they know? They get an A+ in contemporary popular culture.

- 99% know who the cartoon characters Beavis and Butthead are.
- 98% can identify the rap singer Snoop Doggy Dogg.

Beavis and Butthead instead of Washington and Madison; Snoop Doggy Dogg instead of Lincoln? How did it come to this? Students and parents are paying $30,000 a year at elite institutions. For what?

What Happened to American History?

To find out what our nation's top colleges and universities demand of students in the area of American history, ACTA conducted a study of graduation requirements at the same 55 colleges and

universities surveyed by the Roper organization. These are the institutions, such as Harvard and Amherst, which set the standard for all the rest. (*See* Appendix B.)

For each school, the most recent undergraduate course catalog or Internet course listing was used to define the graduation requirements and to determine what history or American history courses are required of students before they graduate.

The results are worse than could have been imagined. Students can now graduate from 100% of the top colleges without taking a single course in American history.

Novelist Milan Kundera once said that, if you want to destroy a country, destroy its memory. If a hostile power wanted to erase America's civic heritage, it could hardly do a better job -- short of actually prohibiting the study of American history -- than America's elite colleges and universities are doing.

More shocking still is that, at 78% of the institutions, students are not required to take any history at all. The best that can be said is that they are permitted to take history to satisfy other requirements in such areas as social sciences or diversity. Only the fact that many students find history useful and interesting saves the subject from extinction.

It is not surprising that college seniors know little American history. Few students leave high school with an adequate knowledge of American history and even the best colleges and universities do nothing to close the "knowledge gap."

The abandonment of history requirements is part of a national trend. In 1988, the National Endowment for the Humanities publicized the first troubling indication that America was losing its historic memory. NEH issued a report concluding that more than 80% of colleges and universities permitted students to graduate without taking a course in American history while 37% of those institutions allowed students to avoid history altogether. Now, thirteen years later, as outlined in Appendix B, standards have fallen further -- 100% do not require American history, and 78% require no history at all.

The problem is not limited to history. In 1996, the National Association of Scholars issued another seminal report, *The Dissolution of General Education*, which concluded that, during the last thirty years, the commitment of American higher education to providing students with a broad and rigorous exposure to major areas of knowledge has virtually vanished. In its stead, students pick and choose from a smorgasbord of courses that are too often on narrow, specialized topics. As the widely-acclaimed study by the Association of American Colleges, *Integrity in the College Curriculum*, concluded in 1990: "As far as what passes as college curriculum, almost anything goes." Is it any wonder that students end up with an understanding that is equally narrow, fragmented, and less than the sum of its parts?

In the country that gave birth to Jefferson's conception of an educated citizenry, colleges and universities are failing to provide the kind of general education that is needed for graduates to be involved and educated citizens.

Why Does American History Matter?

Other than our schools, no institutions bear greater responsibility for the transmission of our heritage than colleges and universities. They educate almost two-thirds of our citizens, including all our school teachers, lawyers, doctors, journalists, and public leaders. They set the admissions and curricular requirements that signal to students, teachers, parents, and the public what every educated citizen in a democracy must know.

What happens in higher education thus relates directly to what happens in K-12. If colleges and universities no longer require their students to have a basic knowledge of American civilization and its heritage, we are all in danger of losing a common frame of reference that has sustained our free society for so many generations.

As ACTA chairman and former NEH chairman Lynne V. Cheney observes, in *Telling the Truth*, "[I]t is from our colleges and universities that messages radiate -- or fail to radiate to schools, to legal institutions, to popular culture, and to politics about the importance of reason, of trying to overcome bias, of seeking truth through evidence and verification." If our graduates leave school without knowing the foundations of American society, children they teach will certainly do no better.

It is sometimes said that historical facts do not matter. But citizens who fail to know basic landmarks of history and civics are unlikely to be able to reflect on their meaning. They fail to recognize the unique nature of our society, and the importance of preserving it. They lack an understanding of the very principles which bind our society -- namely, liberty, justice, government by the consent of the governed, and equality under the law.

As Lynne Cheney has also written, "Knowledge of the ideas that have molded us and the ideals that have mattered to us functions as a kind of civic glue. Our history and literature give us symbols to share; they help us all, no matter how diverse our backgrounds, feel part of a common undertaking."

What Should Be Done?

Immediate steps must be taken to ensure that the memory of our great nation and its remarkable past is passed on to the next generation. The following actions should be taken by colleges and universities, students and their families, alumni and donors, state and federal governments, and accrediting agencies.

By Colleges and Universities

Colleges and universities should make improving students' historical memory and civic competence an urgent priority. Boards of trustees and state agencies with higher education oversight should take steps to ensure that institutions of higher education have adequate requirements in American history and history in general. Faculty, whose personal interest often draws them to specialized topics, should teach what students need to know, not what faculty desire to teach.

The most direct solution is a strong core curriculum, with a broad-based, rigorous course on American history required of all students. The course should include the breadth of American history, from the colonial period to the present, and the long struggle to defend liberty against all foes domestic and foreign and to expand democratic rights at home and abroad. Students should be required to study the great civic documents of the nation, beginning with the Declaration of Independence, Constitution, the Bill of Rights, the Federalist papers, and the Gettysburg Address. Such a course gives students a sense not only of where the country has been, but what it has meant.

By Students and Their Families

The first challenge for students and their families is selecting a college. Some colleges have strong core curricula that ensure that every graduate will be well-grounded in the full range of basic subjects, including American history. Most have loose cafeteria-style requirements that let the students choose for themselves. Some no longer even offer traditional, broad-based courses in American history.

Before selecting a college, students and their families should look at catalogues, examining requirements and course descriptions and ideally accessing course syllabi on the web. College is a big investment, and it deserves as much research as any other major purchase. A hot reputation and fancy student center are no guarantee of a solid academic program.

Students who are already attending a college can make up for colleges' deficiencies by selecting *for themselves* those courses, including American history, that will prepare them for successful participation in our civic as well as economic life. Parents should help their students understand that trendy courses that may strike their short-term fancy will not well serve their long-term needs.

By Alumni and Donors

Alumni should take an active interest in whether their alma maters have strong requirements in American history and other basic subjects. They should not allow their degrees to be devalued by a decline in college standards.

Those who give can be especially helpful, since it is possible to target gifts to outstanding programs and projects in American history and civic understanding. The American Council of Trustees and Alumni has established a program, the Fund for Academic Renewal (FAR), that assists donors, free of charge, in identifying outstanding programs and directing their gifts to support them.

By State and Federal Governments and Accrediting Agencies

Consumers in the higher education market cannot make wise choices if they have no information. Most college guides and rankings give little or no information about the curriculum. The U.S. Department of Education -- and state governments for institutions in their states -- should publish and disseminate a national report on collegiate standards, listing which colleges require such basic subjects as English, history, mathematics, and science, and which do not.

Federal and state governments should target some of the funds from existing grant programs to support outstanding core curricula that include American history and civics.

Accrediting agencies, which have so often neglected issues of academic quality, should include adequate requirements in American history and other basic disciplines among their criteria for assessing colleges and universities.

Conclusion

On this Presidents' Day 2000, it is indeed ironic that many -- if not most -- of our college seniors are unfamiliar with and ignorant about the individuals we celebrate. The time is ripe for citizens, parents, families and policymakers to demand a renewed exploration and examination of our history. It is not too late to restore America's memory.

Prepared by Anne D. Neal and Jerry L. Martin, American Council of Trustees and Alumni
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Elite College History Survey

Conducted for

The American Council of
Trustees and Alumni

by

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Introduction

The American Council of Trustees and Alumni commissioned the Center for Survey Research and Analysis (CSRA) at the University of Connecticut to conduct a survey of college seniors at elite colleges and universities in America. For the purposes of the survey, "elite" was defined as the Top 25 National Universities and Top 25 National Liberal Arts Colleges as defined by U.S. News and World Report. Results are based on 556 telephone interviews with seniors at those elite colleges and universities that were conducted between December 2, 1999 and December 20, 1999.

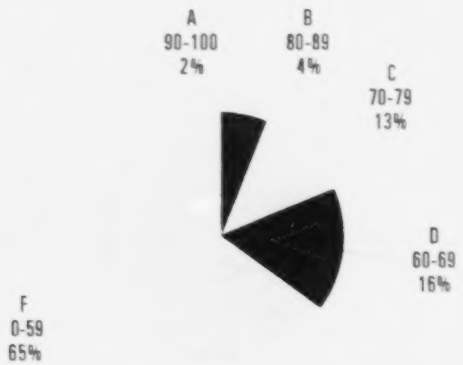
The survey consisted of 34 total questions designed to measure college seniors' knowledge of American history, government, popular culture, and famous quotations. All students were read each question and a number of possible answer choices. Students were then asked to select the answer they thought was correct. They also had the opportunity to volunteer a "Don't know" response.

Summary of Overall Performance

Only one student answered all (100%) questions correctly. The lowest score was six percent (two in total) of all questions correctly answered, which was obtained by two students. The average student score as measured by mean and median, was fifty-three percent (53%) correct.

If this survey were a test given to a college class, four out of five (81%) students would receive a grade of either a D (16%) or a failing grade (65%), while only nineteen percent (19%) would receive a grade of C or higher. Of those that would pass, only two percent (2%) would receive an A, four percent (4%) would receive a B, and eleven percent (11%) would receive a C.

Figure 1. Percent Correct per Letter Grade



Summary of Key Findings

Judging by the percent correct, the easiest questions for students to answer were those about popular culture. The question which asked students to identify Beavis and Butthead, and the question which asked students to identify Snoop Doggy Dogg, were the easiest for students to answer, with ninety-nine (99%) and ninety-eight (98%) of the students giving the correct response.

Among the hardest questions for students to answer correctly were those concerning early American history.

- The question that asked students the source of the phrase, "Government of the people, by the people, and for the people" had only twenty-two percent (22%) of the students answering correctly that it was from the Gettysburg Address.
- Only thirty-eight percent (38%) of students asked to identify the lowest point in American fortunes in the Revolutionary War correctly answered Valley Forge while nearly one-quarter (24%) incorrectly responded with Bunker Hill, fourteen percent (14%) responded with Saratoga, seven percent (7%) answered Fort Ticonderoga, and seventeen percent (17%) either did not know the answer or refused to answer.
- The question that asked students who the "Father of the Constitution" was had only twenty three percent (23%) of the students answering correctly while a majority of students (54%) identified Thomas Jefferson rather than James Madison.

When students were asked to identify the European who traveled through the U.S. and detailed his observations in *Democracy in America*, just under one half (49%) correctly identified (Alexis de) Tocqueville, while a significant minority (32%) thought that person was Lafayette. Similarly, when students were asked the purpose of the Missouri Compromise, just over half (52%) responded correctly, while approximately one quarter (26%) incorrectly responded that it settled the boundary dispute between Missouri and Kansas.

A summary of the percentage of students correctly answering all questions asked is presented in figure 2. The following items summarize some of the more interesting patterns in the following figure.

Virtually all college seniors can identify popular culture items.

- Ninety-nine percent of all college students surveyed identified Beavis and Butthead as television cartoon characters. A very small minority (1%) thought that the cartoon characters were a musical group.
- Similarly, ninety-eight percent of college students can identify Snoop Doggy Dogg as a rap singer while only one percent thought the rap singer was a cartoon by Charles Schultz.

Some questions on American history were answered correctly by a majority of students.

- Nearly nine in ten (89%) college seniors know that Sputnik was the first man-made satellite while small minorities felt that Sputnik was either the first animal to travel into space (7%), a telecommunications system (1%), or a hydrogen bomb (1%).

- *Just under three quarters (73%) of college seniors recognize that John Adams was the second* President of the United States. Twenty-five percent (25%) incorrectly identified other choices Thomas Jefferson (15%), James Madison (8%), and Benjamin Franklin (2%).

- Similarly, seventy-two percent of college seniors know that Joseph Stalin was the leader of the Soviet Union when the U.S. entered the Second World War. Just under one fifth (18%) thought Nikita Khrushchev was the leader of the Soviet Union at the time.

Little more than half of college seniors know general information about American Democracy and the Constitution.

- Just over half (53%) of the seniors correctly identified the purpose of the Federalist Papers as an attempt to gain ratification of the Constitution, with slightly less than one fifth saying that their purpose was to win foreign approval for the Revolutionary War (17%) or to establish a strong, free press in the colonies (16%).

- Sixty percent recognized the Constitution as the document that established the division of powers between the states and the federal government. Interestingly, just under one third (26%) thought that the Articles of Confederation granted the division of powers.

- Similarly, fifty-six percent recognize that the Magna Carta is the foundation of the British Parliamentary system. However, nearly one quarter (24%) of those surveyed thought the Magna Carta was the charter signed by the Pilgrims on the Mayflower.

- Interestingly, although more than half of college seniors understand questions about the fundamental concepts of American Democracy and the Constitution, less than one quarter (23%) correctly identified James Madison as the "Father of the Constitution."

In general, College seniors do not know the specifics about major wars the U.S. participated in.

- Approximately one-third of elite college seniors (34%) correctly identified George Washington as the American general at Yorktown; 37 percent thought that Ulysses S. Grant was the general at that battle.

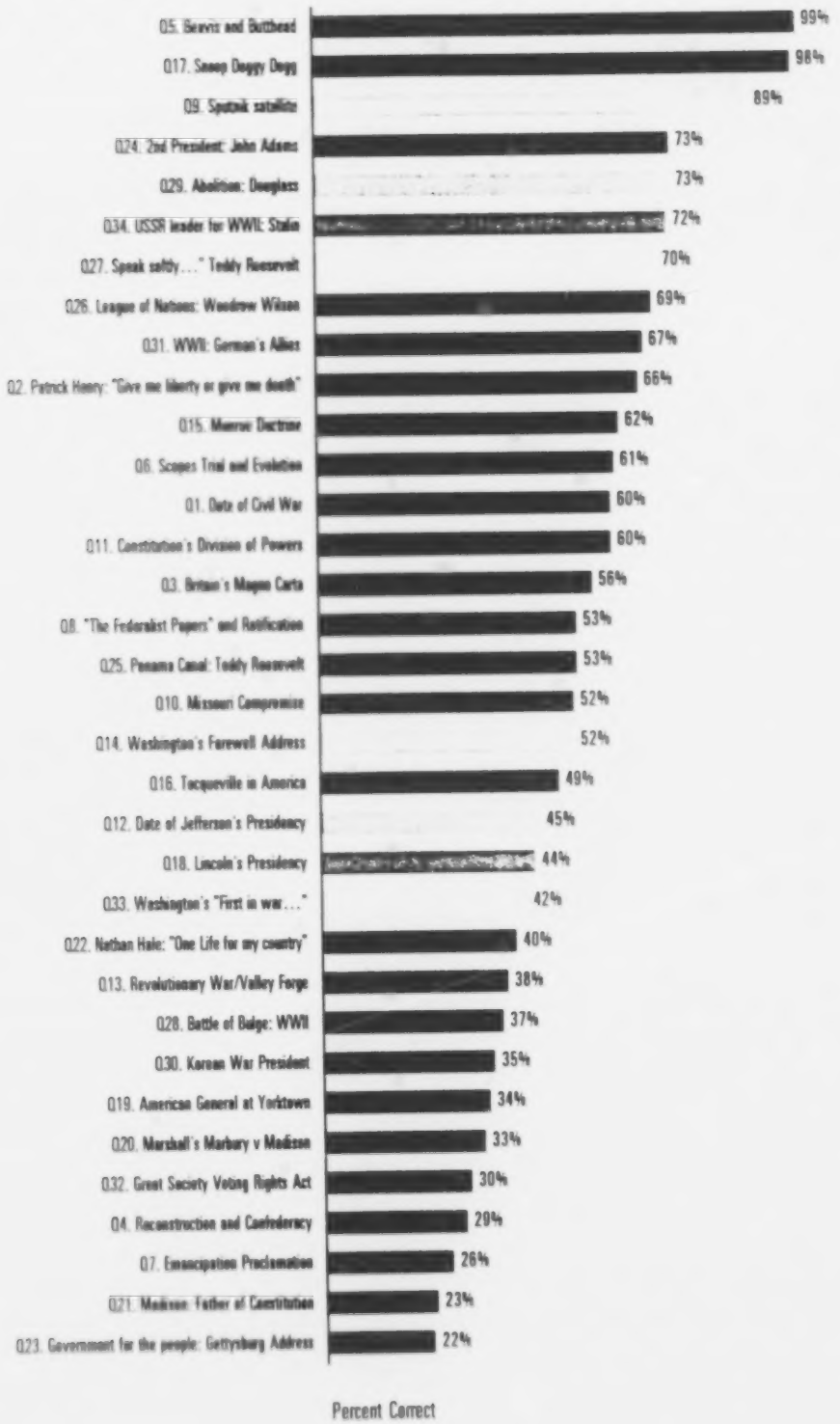
- Thirty-five percent (35%) of college seniors know that Harry Truman was president during the Korean War, compared to nearly half (47%) who thought that Dwight Eisenhower was President at that time.

- Fewer than four in ten seniors (37%) correctly identified the Battle of the Bulge as being fought during World War II, while just under one third of the respondents (29%) thought the battle was fought during World War I.

- The one exception to this pattern is that sixty seven percent of college seniors recognize that Italy and Japan were the two nations allied with Germany when the U.S. entered World War II, while small minorities misidentified Italy and Russia (15%), Russia and Japan (10%), and Italy and Poland (7%) as Germany's allies.

- There is virtually no difference between the responses of history or social science majors and students of other majors. There was also very little variation among subgroups.

Figure 2. Summary of Correct Responses to Questions



Sample Design

A total of 556 randomly selected Seniors from the top 25 National Universities and top 25 National Liberal Arts Colleges, as defined by U.S. News and World Report[1], were interviewed for this survey (See Table 3.) Because of ties in the rankings, a total of 26 National Universities and 29 National Liberal Arts Colleges were included in the sample.

Table 3. Top Schools as Defined By U.S. News and World Report

National Universities		National Liberal Arts Colleges	
Rank	School	Rank	School
1	California Institute of Technology	1	Swarthmore College (PA)
2	Harvard University (MA)	2	Amherst College (MA)
3	Massachusetts Inst. of Technology	3	Williams College (MA)
4	Princeton University (NJ)	4	Wellesley College (MA)
4	Yale University (CT)	5	Haverford College (PA)
6	Stanford University (CA)	5	Middlebury College (VT)
7	Duke University (NC)	7	Pomona College (CA)
7	Johns Hopkins University (MD)	8	Carleton College (MN)
7	University of Pennsylvania	9	Bowdoin College (ME)
10	Columbia University (NY)	10	Wesleyan University (CT)
11	Cornell University (NY)	11	Davidson College (NC)
11	Dartmouth College (NH)	11	Grinnell College (IA)
13	University of Chicago	13	Smith College (MA)
14	Brown University (RI)	14	Claremont McKenna College (CA)
14	Northwestern University (IL)	14	Washington and Lee University (VA)
14	Rice University (TX)	16	Mount Holyoke College (MA)
17	Washington University (MO)	17	Vassar College (NY)
18	Emory University (GA)	18	Bryn Mawr College (PA)
19	University of Notre Dame (IN)	18	Colby College (ME)
20	University of California-Berkeley	18	Colgate University (NY)
20	Vanderbilt University (TN)	18	Hamilton College (NY)
22	University of Virginia	22	Trinity College (CT)
23	Carnegie Mellon University (PA)	23	Bates College (ME)
23	Georgetown University (DC)	24	Macalester College (MN)
25	University of California-Los Angeles	25	Barnard College (NY)
25	University of Michigan-Ann Arbor	25	Colorado College
		25	Connecticut College
		25	Oberlin College (OH)
		25	University of the South (TN)

[1]Ranking as published for 1999-2000 in ***America's Best Colleges***, U.S. News and World Report. Available online at http://www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/college/cohome.htm.

All interviews were conducted by telephone. Students were randomly selected from these colleges and universities using three distinct methods designed to include all colleges and universities in the sample frame. Published directories were used for schools where available. Electronic directories were available from Survey Sampling, Inc., for 30 schools comprising 56% of the total students in Top 50 schools. Students were randomly selected from these directories. For schools where student telephone numbers were not available but student e-mail addresses were available, student names were randomly selected to receive e-mail letters requesting survey participation. These surveys were completed by telephone with responding students. In cases where no directory of student names was available, CSRA obtained dormitory telephone exchanges and generated random telephone numbers to reach students. Survey interviewers screened for school and class (senior, junior, and so forth) in all cases, and interviewed only currently enrolled seniors at appropriate colleges and universities.

The final results were weighted to reflect population percentages, according to total undergraduate students, for type of school. Schools were divided into three categories for these weights: National Universities with 10,000 or fewer undergraduate students, National Universities with more than 10,000 students, and liberal arts colleges.

The sample error associated with a survey of this size is ±4%, meaning that there is less than one chance in twenty that the results of a survey of this size would differ by more that 4% in either direction from the results which would be obtained if all students at the selected colleges had been interviewed. The sample error is larger for sub-groups. CSRA also attempted to minimize other possible sources of error in this survey.

Table 4. Summary of Population Estimates and Completed Interviews By Stratum

Stratum	Number of Institutions	Total Students	Percent of Total	Number of Students Interviewed	Weight
National Universities 10,000 or Less	21	119,322	44.0%	228	1.07
National Universities More Than 10,000	5	97,190	35.8%	132	1.51
National Liberal Arts Colleges	29	54,781	20.2%	196	0.57
Total in Sample Frame	55	271,293	100%	556	

About CSRA

The Center for Survey Research and Analysis (CSRA), formerly the polling unit of The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, is a non-partisan, non-profit organization dedicated to the study of public opinion. CSRA is nationally and internationally recognized as a leader in the field of public opinion research. The scope of CSRA projects ranges from national and international studies of public opinion and public policy to local community-based surveys. From the Director to the interviewers, all staff members are committed to producing the highest quality data. CSRA is dedicated to forming partnerships with our clients. Project managers work directly with clients to create effective research designs and data collection methods to achieve clients' specific goals. Clients are consulted and informed through every step of the project.

CSRA strictly adheres to the code of ethics published by the American Association for Public Opinion Research. This rigorous code requires that we fully divulge our research methods, treat all respondents with respect and honesty, and take steps to insure that our results are not presented in a distorted or misleading manner.

Elite College History Survey
Based on Interviews with 556 Students at
Elite Colleges and Universities in the U.S.
Final Weighted Results

Hello my name is _____ and I am calling from the Center for Survey Research and Analysis at the University of Connecticut. We are conducting a survey of college seniors. May I please speak to the college senior with the next birthday?

This survey contains several questions that you may or may not know the answers to, but it is important that we get everyone's answers.

Q1. When was the Civil War?

a. 1750-1800	10%
b. 1800-1850	26%
c. 1850-1900	**60%**
d. 1900-1950	1%
e. after 1950	0%
DK/Ref	2%

Q2. Who said "Give me liberty or give me death?"

a. John Hancock	7%
b. James Madison	9%
c. Patrick Henry	**66%**
d. Samuel Adams	10%
DK/Ref	7%

Q3. What is the Magna Carta?

a. The foundation of the British parliamentary system	**56%**
b. The Great Seal of the monarchs of England	5%
c. The French Declaration of the Rights of Man	9%
d. The charter signed by the Pilgrims on the Mayflower	25%
DK/Ref	5%

Q4. The term "Reconstruction" refers to:

a. Payment of European countries' debts to the United States after the First World War	8%
b. Repairing of the physical damage caused by the Civil War	59%
c. Readmission of the Confederate states and the protection of the rights of Black citizens	**29%**
d. Rebuilding of the transcontinental railroad and the canal system	2%
DK/Ref	3%

Q5. Are Beavis and Butthead...

a. A radio show	0%
b. Television cartoon characters	**99%**
c. A musical group	1%
d. Fictional soldiers	0%
DK/Ref -	0%

Q6. The Scopes Trial was about:

a. Freedom of the press	7%
b. Teaching evolution in the schools	**61%**
c. Prayer in the schools	14%
d. Education in private schools	5%
DK/Ref	14%

Q7. The Emancipation Proclamation issued by Lincoln stated that:

a. Slaves were free in areas of the Confederate states not held by the Union	**26%**
b. The slave trade was illegal	8%
c. Slaves who fled to Canada would be protected	1%
d. Slavery was abolished in the Union	63%
DK/Ref	1%

Q8. The purpose of the authors of "The Federalist Papers" was to:

a. Establish a strong, free press in the colonies	16%
b. Confirm George Washington's election as the first president	4%
c. Win foreign approval for the Revolutionary War	17%
d. Gain ratification of the U.S. Constitution	**53%**
DK/Ref	9%

Q9. Sputnik was the name given to the first:

a. Telecommunications system	1%
b. Animal to travel into space	7%
c. Hydrogen bomb	2%
d. Man-made satellite	**89%**
DK/Ref	2%

Q10. The Missouri Compromise was the act that:

a. Funded the Lewis and Clark expedition on the upper Missouri River	7%
b. Granted statehood to Missouri but denied the admission of any other states	8%
c. Settled the boundary dispute between Missouri and Kansas	26%
d. Admitted Maine into the Union as a free state and Missouri as a slave state	**52%**
DK/Ref	8%

Q11. Which document established the division of powers between the states and the federal government?

a. The Marshall Plan	8%
b. The Constitution	**60%**
c. The Declaration of Independence	2%
d. The Articles of Confederation	26%
DK/Ref	4%

Q12. When was Thomas Jefferson president?

a. 1780-1800	33%
b. 1800-1820	**45%**
c. 1820-1840	9%
d. 1840-1860	5%
e. 1860-1880	2%
DK/Ref	6%

Q13. What was the lowest point in American fortunes in the Revolutionary War?

a. Saratoga	14%
b. Bunker Hill	24%
c. Valley Forge	**38%**
d. Fort Ticonderoga	7%
DK/Ref	17%

Q14. In his Farewell Address, President George Washington warned against the danger of:

a. Expanding into territories beyond the Appalachian Mountains	11%
b. Having war with Spain over Mexico	8%
c. Entering into permanent alliances with foreign governments	**52%**
d. Building a standing army and strong navy	19%
DK/Ref	9%

Q15. The Monroe Doctrine declared that:

a. The American blockade of Cuba was in accord with international law	10%
b. Europe should not acquire new territories in the Western Hemisphere	**62%**
c. Trade with China should be open to all Western nations	9%
d. The annexation of the Philippines was legitimate	9%
DK/Ref	10%

Q16. Who was the European who traveled in the United States and wrote down perceptive comments about what he saw in Democracy in America?

a. Lafayette	32%
b. Tocqueville (TOKE-ville)	**49%**
c. Crevecoeur (cre-VA-see-aire)	7%
d. Napoleon	3%
DK/Ref	9%

Q17. Identify Snoop Doggy Dogg.

a. A rap singer	**98%**
b. Cartoon by Charles Schultz	1%
c. A mystery series	0%
d. A jazz pianist	0%
DK/Ref	2%

Q18. Abraham Lincoln was president between:

a. 1780-1800	5%
b. 1800-1820	7%
c. 1820-1840	12%
d. 1840-1860	29%
e. 1860-1880	**44%**
DK/Ref	3%

Q19. Who was the American general at Yorktown?

a. William T. Sherman	11%
b. Ulysses S. Grant	37%
c. Douglas Mc Arthur	6%
d. George Washington	**34%**
DK/Ref	12%

Q20. John Marshall was the author of:

a. Roe v. Wade	9%
b. Dred Scott v. Kansas	15%
c. Marbury v. Madison	**33%**
d. Brown v. Board of Education	28%
DK/Ref	15%

Q21. Who was the "Father of the Constitution?"

a. George Washington	8%
b. Thomas Jefferson	53%
c. Benjamin Franklin	13%
d. James Madison	**23%**
DK/Ref	2%

Q22. Who said, "I regret that I have only one life to give for my country?"

a. John F. Kennedy	23%
b. Benedict Arnold	17%
c. John Brown	8%
d. Nathan Hale	**40%**
DK/Ref	13%

Q23. What was the source of the following phrase: "Government of the people, by the people, for the people"?

a. The speech: "I have a Dream"	1%
b. Declaration of Independence	43%
c. U.S. Constitution	31%
d. Gettysburg Address	**22%**
DK/Ref	2%

Q24. Who was the second president of the U.S.?

a. Thomas Jefferson	15%
b. James Madison	8%
c. John Adams	**73%**
d. Benjamin Franklin	2%
DK/Ref	3%

Q25. Who was president when the U.S. purchased the Panama Canal?

a. Theodore Roosevelt	**53%**
b. Jimmy Carter	9%
c. Franklin D. Roosevelt	15%
d. Woodrow Wilson	14%
DK/Ref	9%

Q26. Who was the leading advocate for the U.S. entry into the League of Nations?

a. George C. Marshall	7%
b. Woodrow Wilson	**69%**
c. Henry Cabot Lodge	3%
d. Eleanor Roosevelt	10%
DK/Ref	12%

Q27. Who said, "Speak softly but carry a big stick"?

a. William T. Sherman	3%
b. Sitting Bull	13%
c. John D. Rockefeller	8%
d. Theodore Roosevelt	**70%**
DK/Ref	7%

Q28. The Battle of the Bulge occurred during:

a. The Vietnam War	3%
b. World War II	**37%**
c. World War I	29%
d. The Civil War	22%
DK/Ref	9%

Q29. Which of the following was a prominent leader of the Abolitionist Movement?

a. Malcolm X	2%
b. Martin Luther King Jr.	5%
c. W.E.B. Du Bois	15%
d. Frederick Douglass	**73%**
DK/Ref	5%

Q30. Who was the president of the United States at the beginning of the Korean War?

a. John F. Kennedy	7%
b. Franklin D. Roosevelt	4%
c. Dwight Eisenhower	47%
d. Harry Truman	**35%**
DK/Ref	7%

Q31. When the United States entered World War II, which two major nations were allied with Germany?

a. Italy and Japan	**67%**
b. Italy and Poland	7%
c. Italy and Russia	15%
d. Russia and Japan	10%
DK/Ref	2%

Q32. Social legislation passed under President Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society Program included:

a. The Sherman Antitrust Act	16%
b. The Voting Rights Act	**30%**
c. The Tennessee Valley Authority	19%
d. The Civilian Conservation Corps	22%
DK/Ref	14%

Q33. Who was "First in war, first in peace, first in the hearts of his countrymen?"

a. George Washington	**42%**
b. Woodrow Wilson	8%
c. Dwight Eisenhower	22%
d. Abraham Lincoln	15%
DK/Ref	14%

Q34. Who was the leader of the Soviet Union when the United States entered the Second World War?

a. Peter Ustinov (YOU-stin-off)	3%
b. Nikita Khrushchev (CRUZ-chev)	18%
c. Marshal Tito	1%
d. Joseph Stalin	**72%**
DK/Ref	7%

Appendix B

Of the 55 colleges and universities surveyed, absolutely *none* require their students to take a course in American history before they graduate. For purposes of this study, colleges and universities have been given the benefit of the doubt. Any required college course in American history – no matter how narrow – will qualify as an American history requirement. The findings are based on a review of the most recent undergraduate course catalogs or Internet course listings.

Of the 55 colleges and universities surveyed, only 22% require their students to take a course in history at all. Again, this result is reached using a very generous definition of a history requirement. Institutions are classified as requiring history even if the history "requirement" can be satisfied by a very narrow course or can be waived by attaining a certain level on an Advanced Placement exam. Social science requirements that might be, but are not required to be satisfied by history courses, do not qualify as history requirements.

Amherst College– American history – no.
History – no.

Barnard College– American history – no.
History – no.

Bates College– American history – no.
History – no.

Bowdoin College- American history – no.
History – no.

Students must take two courses that focus on a "non-Eurocentric culture or society." Because this requirement may be satisfied by non-history courses, however, it does not count as a history requirement.

Brown University– American history – no.
History – no.

Bryn Mawr College– American history – no.
History – no.

University of California at Berkeley- American history – no.
History – no.

The University requires all graduates to fulfill an American History and Institutions requirement, a mandate set by the State of California. A student may be exempted from this "requirement" by fulfilling state high school history requirements with a grade of C or better. Accordingly, this is not counted as a college-level requirement.

Students must also satisfy the American Cultures Breadth Requirement by taking an American cultures course, with a grade no lower than C- or P. "American Cultures" can be satisfied by such courses as "No Body's Perfect" (offered by the English department), "Alternative Sexual Identities and Communities," and "Cultural Landscape of the San Francisco Bay Area." Because this requirement can be satisfied by non-history courses, it is not counted as a history requirement.

University of California At Los Angeles- American history – no

The University requires all graduates to fulfill an American History and Institutions requirement, a mandate set by the State of California. A student may be exempted from this requirement, however, by fulfilling state high school history requirements with a grade of B or better. Accordingly, this is not counted as a history requirement.

History – yes

California Institute of Technology- American history – no
History – no

Carleton College– American history – no
History – no

Carnegie Mellon University– American history – no
History – no

There is a World Cultures requirement designed to help the student see the "connection between seemingly unrelated areas such as language and technology or health practices and kinship." Because it does not necessarily focus on history, it does not count as a history requirement.

University of Chicago - American history – no
History – yes

Claremont McKenna College - American history – no
History – no

Colby College – American history – no
History – no

Students are required to take a three or four credit hour course in Historical Studies -- "[c]ourses that investigate human experience by focusing on the development of cultures and societies as they evolve through time." This requirement may, however, be satisfied by courses in departments as diverse as Administrative Science, French, and Education and Human Development. Accordingly, it is not counted as a history requirement.

Colgate University – American history – no.
History – yes.

Colorado College – American history – no.
History – yes.

Columbia University – American history – no.
History – yes.

Connecticut College - American history – no.
History – no.

Cornell University - American history – no.
History – no.

Students must include at least one course that focuses "on an area or a people other than those of the United States, Canada, or Europe, and one course that focuses on an historical period before the twentieth century." Courses that satisfy this requirement include non-history classes in Archaeology, Anthropology, Linguistics, and English. Accordingly, these do not count as history requirements.

Dartmouth College – American history – no.
History – no.

There is a World Culture requirement: "Each student must take at least one course which has as its subject matter the culture, ideas, and/or the institutions of societies in each of the following cultural areas: 1) Europe, including the classical civilizations of the Mediterranean; 2) the United States and Canada; 3) non-Western societies." These requirements may be satisfied by taking courses in literature and other fields. Accordingly, this is not counted as an American history or general history requirement.

Davidson College - American history – no.
History – yes.

Duke University - American history – no.
History – no.

Emory University – American history – no.

Every student must take one course on "the history of politics, society, or culture in the United States providing a perspective on American diversity." In late 1999, one could satisfy these requirements by taking courses in economics, linguistics, education, religion, or sociology. Accordingly, it is not counted as an American history requirement.

History – no.

Every student must take one course covering "a significant historical span of Western history and culture other than the United States." Students must also take at least one course concerning a nonwestern culture or comparative and international studies. These requirements may be satisfied by non-history courses in Anthropology, Education, Film Studies, Literature, Music, Political Science, and Philosophy. Accordingly, they are not counted as history requirements.

Georgetown University – American history – no.
History – yes.

Students must complete two history courses to graduate. It is possible to be exempted from this requirement by receiving a certain score on Advanced Placement exams.

Grinnell College - American history – no.
History – no.

Hamilton College – American history – no.
History – no.

There are two courses required in "historical studies and social sciences" which include public policy and women's studies among others. Because the loose requirement permits a student to avoid history altogether, this is not counted as a history requirement.

Harvard University - American history – no.
History – yes.

Haverford College - American history – no.
History – no.

Johns Hopkins University - American history – no.
History – no.

Macalester College - American history – no.
History – no.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology- American history – no.
History – no.

MIT requires a "historical studies" or "cultural and social studies" course. However, this requirement may be satisfied by non-history courses such as "Environmental Politics and Policy" and "Humanistic Perspectives on Medicine." Accordingly, it is not counted as a history requirement.

University of Michigan - American history – no.
History – no.

Middlebury College– American history – no
History – no

All students are required to complete one course focusing on some aspect of the cultures and civilizations of the United States. Students are also required to complete one course focusing on "some aspect of European cultures and civilizations" and one course focusing on "some aspect of cultures and civilizations other than those of Europe and the United States." However, these requirements can be satisfied by non-history courses in Philosophy, Sociology, and Theatre, Dance, and Film/Video. Accordingly, these do not count as American history or general history requirements.

Mount Holyoke College- American history – no
History – no

Northwestern University - American history – no
History – no

Students must take at least two quarter courses in "Historical Studies." However, courses in non-history fields such as German, Anthropology, and French will satisfy the requirement. Accordingly, this does not count as a history requirement.

Notre Dame University - American history – no
History – yes

Oberlin College - American history – no
History – no.

University of Pennsylvania – American history – no
History – no.

Students must take two courses in the "History and Tradition" Sector. This requirement can be satisfied, however, by such courses as "The Barbarian Image" and "Introduction to Linguistics." Because the loose requirement permits students to avoid courses in history altogether, this does not count as a history requirement.

Pomona College - American history – no
History – no.

Princeton University - American history – no
History – yes.

Rice University - American history – no
History – no.

Smith College - American history – no.
History – no.

University of the South - American history – no.
History – yes.

Stanford University - American history – no.
History – no.

Swarthmore College - American history – no.
History – no.

Trinity College - American history – no.
History – no.

Vanderbilt University – American history – no.

Students are required to take 9 to 12 hours in History and Culture. Vanderbilt states that this requirement demands "a sustained consideration of the American national experience and a grasp of the thoughts, language, or experiences that have contributed to the formation of at least one other cultural or national tradition." The six-hour American component requirement may be satisfied, however, by non-history courses in African American Studies, Communications Studies, Fine Arts, Music, Political Science, Sociology, Theatre, and Women's Studies. Accordingly, it is not counted as a history requirement.

History – no.

Students are required to take 9 to 12 hours in History and Culture. The six-hour American component may be satisfied by non-history courses. The three to six-hour International Component may be satisfied by 1) courses in a foreign language plus a course in the literature, culture or history of that foreign area or culture, 2) study abroad, or 3) two "courses taught in English that survey traditions and cultural achievements" of seven areas. Those surveys may be satisfied by courses in anthropology , political science, sociology and music. Because the history and culture "requirement" may be satisfied by non-history courses, it is not counted as a requirement.

Vassar College - American history – no.
History – no.

University of Virginia - American history – no.
History – yes.

Washington and Lee University – American history – no.
History – no.

Washington University in St. Louis-

American history – no.
History – no.

Students must satisfy two courses from the areas of "U.S. minority groups, non-European studies and gender studies." Because it is possible to avoid history courses altogether, however, this does not count as a history requirement.

Wellesley College -

American history – no.
History – no.

Wesleyan University -

American history – no.
History – no.

Williams College–

American history – no.
History – no.

There is a requirement in Peoples and Cultures. Each student must complete one graded semester course primarily concerned with "(a) the peoples and cultures of North America that trace their origins to Africa, Asia, Latin America, Oceania, or the Caribbean; Native American peoples and cultures; or (b) the peoples and cultures of Africa, Asia, Latin America, Oceania, or the Caribbean." However, this requirement can be satisfied by non-history courses such as "Afro-American Music" and "Emotions and the Self." Accordingly, it does not count as an American history or general history.

Yale University -

American history – no.
History – no.